



# ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

# News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **CITY OF SAN DIEGO CO-HOSTS FREE FORUM TO EXPLORE THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN SAN DIEGO**

**SAN DIEGO, CA—** The earth's temperature has been gradually warming for 150 years, but nineteen of the twenty hottest years on record have occurred since 1980. According to the National Climatic Data Center, the average winter temperatures are gradually increasing in California—and in San Diego.

As climate change affects the Earth, how will this impact the San Diego region's health, water supply and economic prosperity? The Union of Concerned Scientists reports that the gradually warming air and increased moisture have attracted tropical mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus to the region. Research from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography shows that snow packs in the Sierra Nevada mountains will melt sooner than usual, possibly decreasing the region's water supply. And how will the financial impacts foreseen by the insurance industry affect San Diego's tourism and agricultural businesses?

These and other questions will be discussed at a free public forum on Tuesday, November 16, 2004 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the grand auditorium of the San Diego Natural History Museum in Balboa Park. Titled **"Impacts of Climate Change in Southern California: The Next Thirty Years,"** the forum features a panel of national experts from the fields of health, finance, and earth sciences who will present the most current climate change information pertinent to the San Diego region. The forum will examine the impact of human activities on the earth's "support systems," and will encourage an open discussion about some of the primary factors—such as our dependence on fossil fuel—which in turn increase greenhouse gases. The many positive steps taken in the San Diego region to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will also be identified.

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“The City of San Diego Environmental Services Department is co-sponsoring this event to highlight the importance of taking action locally—regardless of national politics—because we can make a difference and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from City operations,” said Elmer Heap, director of the city’s Environmental Services Department. “The City’s Climate Protection Action Plan, adopted in 2002, targets a 15 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emission by 2010, using 1990 as a baseline. So far we have reduced more than four million tons of emissions and the City has received the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s International Climate Protection Award for 2004,” he said. “We hope our successes will catalyze similar efforts in the business community.”

Professor Pat Abbott, Chair, Department of Geological Services, San Diego State University (SDSU), will moderate the discussion and Judge Robert C. Coates, Chair, Understanding Climate Change, Inc. will welcome attendees. Presenters and topics include:

- **Dr. Tim Barnett, Scripps Institute of Oceanography (SIO), UCSD**, will speak on “Water Supply: Sierra and Rockies Snow Packs & Climate Change;
- **Dr. Richard Somerville, SIO**, “Computer Modeling;”
- **Dr. Janice Longstreth, The Institute for Global Risk Research, Bethesda, Maryland**, “Public Health Risks in the United States;”
- **Anthony Joseph, Lloyd’s of America, New York**, “Insurance Underwriting and Climate Change;” and
- **Dr. Susanne Moser, National Center for Atmospheric Research, Boulder, Colorado**, “Making Climate Hot: Communication Strategies for Climate Change.”

A reception for the forum will be held at 5:30 p.m. and the program begins at 6:15 p.m. R.S.V.P. by Friday, November 12, 2004 by calling (858) 627-3340, or by e-mailing to [sustainability@sandiego.gov](mailto:sustainability@sandiego.gov).

The City of San Diego Environmental Services Department and Understanding Climate Change, Inc., a project of the Mission Valley Rotary, are hosting the form. For more information on climate change, go to <http://understandingclimatechange.org>.

For more information about the City of San Diego’s Sustainable Community Program, or the City’s energy conservation and renewable resources programs, call the Environmental Services Department at (858) 694-7000, or visit its website at <http://www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/>.

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